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'Had his nose cropt for being formerly runaway': disability and the bodies of fugitive slaves in the British Caribbean

Stefanie Hunt-Kennedy

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the ways in which the bodies of enslaved people were portrayed in Barbadian and Jamaican runaway advertisements from 1718 to 1815 to demonstrate that disability was key to slavery's violence. Runaway advertisements indicate that enslaved people were debilitated in a variety of ways: discursively through law and legally sanctioned punishment, work regimes, and the material conditions of slavery. But they did more than merely reflect the presence of disability among the enslaved: they comprised a system of oppression that actually *produced* disability.

In British Caribbean slave societies, running away from one's owner was the gravest non-violent act an enslaved person could commit. Lawmakers claimed that Africans' 'brutish and barbarous nature' caused them to run away and 'committ felonies and other enormities, not only to the terror and affrightment of the neighborhood, but the danger of the Island in general.'¹ Runaways explicitly challenged the institution of slavery by their unsanctioned absence from their owners, depriving owners of laborers, and potentially reducing plantation production. To the extent that they could entice other captives to run away as well, fugitive bondspersons also challenged owners' power over their remaining workforce.² As a mountainous, heavily forested, and comparatively large island, Jamaica offered captives more opportunities for concealment and permanent self-emancipation in the form of maroon communities. Barbados, comparatively small, flat, and densely populated, was a more difficult place for runaways to evade discovery.³ Still, enslaved individuals on the island took flight just as their Jamaican counterparts did. In both places this could represent a temporary act of resistance or an effort to escape the system permanently.

The documenting of fugitive bodies as a means of surveillance was legally inscribed in the earliest slave codes of Barbados and Jamaica. According to the 1661 Barbados slave code, captured runaways were to be taken to the prison where the 'keeper of the prison' was to record all knowledge about the

fugitive's apprehension – location and time – into a book and 'insert the mark and description of the Negroe delivered.'⁴ In addition, within 10 days of the 1661 act's publication, all owners were to provide the secretary a list of all their fugitive bondspeople.⁵ By 1673, the Marshall was obliged to 'give a description of the said Negro's Marks as also as neare as hee can learne how long the said Negroes have been absent from their Master's plantacon [*sic*] with their names' and fix such description 'upon the posts in ye most publique and open places att Port Royall and St. Catherines' so that 'notice may been given to the Inhabitants of each parish of all such Negroes.'⁶ By 1678, Jamaican slave law mandated that descriptions of fugitive bodies be advertised in public spaces 'in the Goales [Jails] of St. Jago de la Vega and Port Royall of the Penalty of one hundred pounds.'⁷ By the following century, authorities in prisons and workhouses were legally obliged to advertise runaways in the Jamaican press 'the height, names, marks, sex, and country ... of each runaway in their custody.'⁸ Through the invocation of these marks, the law disabled the enslaved by limiting their mobility since through such identification enslaved people could be tracked by specific marks they bore on their bodies – scars, impairments, dismembered limbs and extremities, and other physical anomalies. These bodily marks – whether transient, permanent, natural, or inflicted – provide a narrative and testimony to their wearers' lives of suffering and survival.

By the mid-eighteenth century, runaway advertisements were an everyday feature in the British Caribbean press and it was precisely their quotidian nature that gave advertisements their power.⁹ The disfigured, deformed, and disabled black body was made hyper-visible, though not as something spectacular, but rather as something routine, ordinary, and unremarkable. In publishing the impaired, deformed, and disfigured black body in newspapers, slaveowners simultaneously highlighted and dismissed the danger posed by the figure of the fugitive, using an everyday medium of communication in order to reproduce, naturalize, and render quotidian the routinized violence of colonial slavery and the pretexts for its infliction. As artifacts of the everyday, runaway advertisements suggest how the much more generalized, historically rooted, anti-black racism of the British Atlantic World was articulated in the everyday and the familiar.¹⁰ Runaway notices served a practical purpose, which was to notify free society of fugitive bondspeople in order to apprehend them. And yet they also reflected a discourse used in the making of race and black disability in the British Atlantic World.¹¹

This article looks at the ways in which the bodies of enslaved people were portrayed in Barbadian and Jamaican runaway advertisements from 1718 to 1815 to demonstrate that slavery produced disability in multiple ways, and that runaway advertisements were themselves a disabling force in Caribbean slave societies.¹² My research is based on an analysis of over 1,000 runaway advertisements, which describe approximately 1,200 individual fugitives.¹³ Careful attention to the advertisements reveal that enslaved people were debilitated in a variety of

ways: discursively through law and legally sanctioned punishment, through work regimes, and through the material conditions of slavery.¹⁴ The collection also reveals the particular kinds of physical disability that were produced by slavery. Runaway advertisements demonstrate that dismemberment, branding, sensory impairments, and certain disabling diseases were common. Although some of these conditions do not necessarily constitute disability in the modern sense, disability must be understood in specific historical contexts. Scholars of disability emphasize that as a category of historical analysis, disability is not fixed, natural, or stable, but rather socially constructed and particular to time and place.¹⁵ In the context of Caribbean slavery, for instance, yaws – a highly contagious bacterial infection caused by poor sanitation and overcrowded living quarters – could cause chronic disfigurement and was potentially, though not universally, disabling.¹⁶ Also, marks on the flesh such as brands and scars from the whip, while not necessarily physically debilitating, could disable the enslaved by permanently marking their bodies with signs of criminality and so-called rebelliousness.

This article opens with a discussion of chronological trends regarding distinguishing marks of violence described in runaway advertisements, before moving on to an analysis of the laws pertaining to running away. The study concludes with an analysis of the various manifestations of slavery-induced disability that are described in runaway advertisements. Runaway advertisements published in the British-Caribbean press read as catalogues of recognizable forms of abuse inflicted on the enslaved body and sanctioned by the institution of slavery.

Marks of servitude and chronological trends

Runaway advertisements give us a window into the different physical, intellectual, and emotional impairments of runaways and suggest some possibilities about the changing reference to identifying marks over time (see [Tables 1–4](#)). To get a better sense of how the changing references evolved, the information has been gathered into tables that cover approximately 100 years of fugitive notices. The data has been grouped into 25 year intervals and each ‘mark of servitude’ has been categorized into six groupings: brands, deformities, impairments, disfigurements, amputations, and marks of punishment. Brands include only those who have been branded with signs of ownership – often with the slaveowners’ initials. Brands, such as ‘R’ for runaway have been included in the ‘punishment’ category. Deformities include individuals described as ‘knock-kneed,’ ‘parrot-toed,’ ‘crooked,’ or ‘deformed,’ among other descriptors. Impairments include both physical and sensory impairments. Classified as disfigurements are scars, burns, sores, and wounds. Small pox has not been included among disfigurements because both free and enslaved were susceptible to this disease and, therefore, it does not constitute a ‘mark of servitude.’

Table 1. Identifying marks in Barbadian and Jamaican runaway advertisements, 1718–1743.

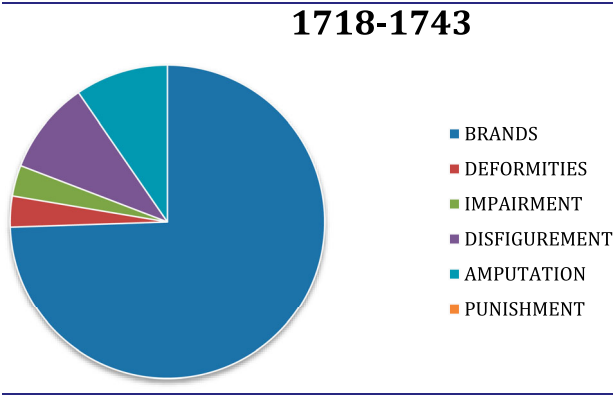


Table 2. Identifying marks in Barbadian and Jamaican runaway advertisements, 1744–1769.

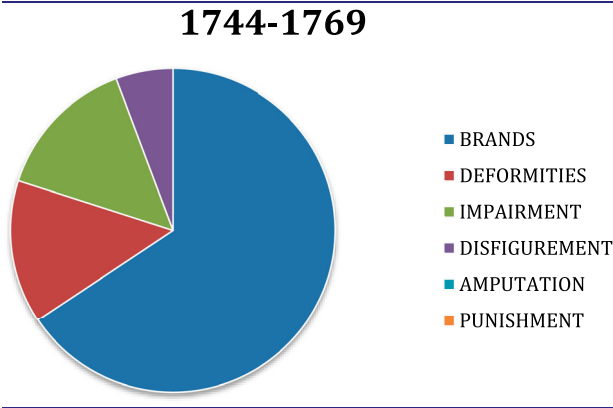


Table 3. Identifying marks in Barbadian and Jamaican runaway advertisements, 1770–1795.

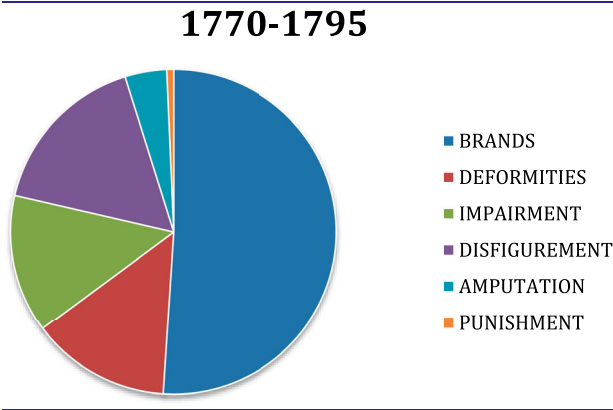
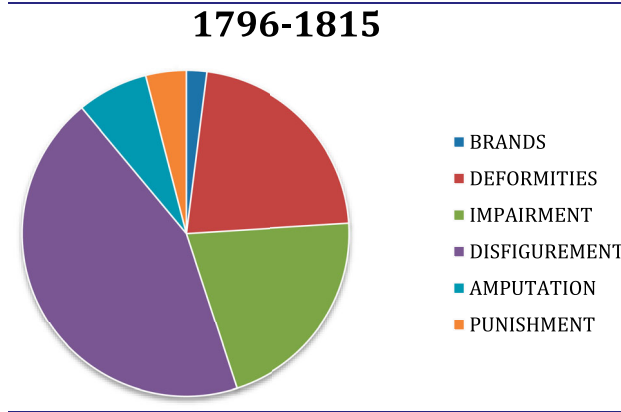


Table 4. Identifying marks in Barbadian and Jamaican runaway advertisements, 1796–1815.



Amputations include individuals described as having missing limbs or extremities. The ‘punishment’ category refers only to cases where owners have indicated that the fugitive had ‘marks of the whip’ or ‘marks of punishment.’ While these identifying marks have been placed in separate categories, it is important to note that several of them overlap.¹⁷

Over a period of 97 years, deformities, impairments, disfigurements, amputations, and marks of punishment all increased, whereas branding significantly declined over the last 19-year period (1796–1815). Such information may not map onto the wider enslaved population in this exact way; however it suggests important changes with regard to identifying marks and the violence inflicted onto enslaved bodies. Many of the marks described in runaway advertisements imply violence; however notices in the first 50 years of this dataset, owners did not identify particular scars or wounds as being marks of punishment, and by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century disfigurements, deformities, and impairments replaced branding as the most pervasive identifying mark in runaway advertisements. This did not necessarily mean that branding had fallen out of practice in Caribbean slave societies, but rather that slaveowners were more conscious of how runaway advertisements were being used by abolitionists as evidence of slavery’s disabling and disfiguring violence.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries marked the first phase of amelioration (1788–1807), when under pressure from the abolitionist movement, planters and lawmakers passed legal measures to supposedly improve the conditions of slavery and encourage slave births. A critique of branding was a significant part of the abolitionists’ campaign. For instance, in his 1786 attack on slavery Thomas Clarkson referred to branding and the slitting of ears (both mentioned in runaway advertisements) as ‘deliberate mutilation’ and ‘shocking barbarity.’¹⁸ By 1824, Clarkson specifically utilized runaway

advertisements from the *Royal Gazette of Jamaica* to demonstrate the brutality of plantation slavery. ‘Numbers of [the enslaved],’ he wrote,

appear to have been branded with the initials of their owner’s names, and other marks, *on the naked flesh*, with a *heated iron*, in the same manner as young horses or cattle are branded when they are turned into our forests.

Clarkson continued his attack and isolated branding as an emblem of slavery’s tyrannical violence. ‘Some of these brand marks upon these slaves,’ he wrote, ‘consisting, as they often do, of *several letters*, must have tortured no inconsiderable portion of the flesh.’¹⁹ Runaway advertisements provided abolitionists evidence of slavery’s violence straight from the pens of slaveowners and, in particular, relentless examples of branding which had become a key feature of the anti-slavery polemic.²⁰ Slaveowners became aware of the power of branding in the campaign against slavery and began to replace it as an identifying mark in runaway advertisements with less visually striking forms of violence. Thus, at the very moment when amelioration efforts to lessen the frequency of impairment and disfigurement among the enslaved came into effect, runaway advertisements indicate a sharp increase of deformities, disfigurements, impairments, amputations, and marks of punishment among fugitive bondspeople. Thus, slaveowners either changed their rhetoric in advertisements or replaced one form of disfiguring violence with another. The failures of amelioration and the power of slaveowners to damage the bodies of bondspeople with impunity were so deeply entrenched in Caribbean slaveowning culture that slavery remained an inherently violent institution despite amelioration efforts. Slaveowners were aware of abolitionist critiques and shifted their public discourse to avoid those critiques.

Fugitivity and the law

In the Barbados and Jamaica statutes some of the most brutal corporeal punishments were reserved for runaway bondspeople.²¹ The first comprehensive slave laws of Barbados (1661) and Jamaica (1664) encouraged the formation of ‘any number of men not exceeding twenty’ to hunt down and ‘apprehend or take [runaways] either alive or dead.’²² These founding laws exonerated whites from disabling or killing bondspeople under punishment for running away or other misdemeanors. According to the 1661 Barbados law and the 1664 Jamaica law, ‘if any slaves under punishment’ for ‘running away or any other crime or misdemeanor towards his said Master shall suffer in life or in member noe person whatsoever shall be accountable to any Law.’²³ The parallel grouping of dismemberment and death suggests that as early as the mid-seventeenth century, dismemberment was both a common punishment against runaways and on a level with death in its brutality. Such laws reveal important insights into the place of disability, and in particular dismemberment, in slavery’s economy of violence.

The changes to Barbadian and Jamaican law from the late seventeenth century throughout the eighteenth century testify to the growing problem of fugitivity in the island. Following an uncovered slave rebellion plot in 1675, the Barbados Assembly amended the law pertaining to runaways declaring

if any Negro or Slave after he hath lived in this Island for the space of Twelve months at least, shall run away from his Master or Mistress, and continue absent above the space of thirty days, such Negro or Slave shall suffer death for the same.

According to the 1692 'An Additional Act to an Act, entitled "An Act for the governing of Negroes," the 1688 Barbados slave code did not include the aforementioned law because 'after some Negroes had suffered death for running away,' the law 'was repealed, it being expected that others would have taken warning thereby, and not have been guilty of such offence for the future.' In 1692, lawmakers reinstated the death penalty for runaways absent for 30 days or more arguing that the 'brutish and barbarous nature' of Africans and their descendants led

to their long absence from the service of their Owners, [where] they become desperate, and daily plot and commit Felonies and other enormities, not only to the terror and affrightment of the Neighbourhood, but the danger of the Island in general.²⁴

The progression of Jamaican laws regarding runaways testifies to the fact that fugitivity had become the island's most pressing concern in the eighteenth century and that disability was key penal strategy employed against runaways for much of the century. According to the 1706/7 Jamaican law, runaways who surrendered would 'be freed from all Corporal Punishment and Loss of Life or Limb' and 'be transported from the island, and sold.'²⁵ Still, bondspeople who had been in the island for one year and ran away for 30 days or more were 'to be punished, by cutting off one of the feet of such Slave.'²⁶ The punishment of fugitives fit the crime in that it attempted to impair the individual's mobility and prevent them from self-absconding in the future. By the mid-eighteenth century, lawmakers claimed that such punishments 'have not proved effectual.' In the 1749 'An Act to inflict further and other Punishments on runaway Slaves, and such as shall entertain them,' lawmakers declared that fugitive bondspeople absent for six months or more be 'tried for capital Offences' and 'suffer Death, or such other Punishment as shall be inflicted.'²⁷ By the 1788 Consolidated Act of the amelioration period, lawmakers turned to confinement to hard labor as punishment for runaways absent for six months or more; if the sentenced runaway escaped again, however, he or she was executed.²⁸ The amelioration law of 1788, while seemingly less brutal in its punishment of runaways, was in the final analysis a sentence of physical debilitation and eventual death through confinement to hard labor. Even in response to a heated attack on the institution of slavery, the 1788 law continued to confirm the supposed suitability of Africans and their descendants to enforced labor and legitimize the notion that black bodies were made to be broken.

The slave laws pertaining to runaways reflect the making of white disability in contrast to the making of black disability. In 1702, Jamaican lawmakers mandated that ‘in case any white person shall be disabled from getting his living by any wound or hurt in the said service,’ the individual ‘shall be paid by the Commissioner ... the sum of twenty pounds per annum for and during his Natural Life.’²⁹ Searching for runaways in Jamaica, an island with established maroon societies, was dangerous and could result in serious injury to whites. Yet, white disability in this context was treated as a consequence of protective service to the island and the maintenance of slave society. Defense of the state included tracking down runaway slaves and whites who became disabled in this service were financially compensated as a testament to their service. The law further reveals the making of white disability and how male citizenship and productivity was defined. If an enslaved individual became disabled, slave-owners were not compensated because a bondsperson’s worth as a productive laborer did not cease with impairment. Bondspeople continued to labor under the threat of violence – in the fields and factories, as well as in less physically taxing positions such as carrying water to field laborers. Thus, black disability was constructed in such a manner that maintained blacks’ supposed fitness for hard labor. In contrast, as free wage-earning workers, whites who became disabled were offered compensation. In compensating disabled whites, the 1702 law constructed the capturing of runaways as a service to the island and those injured as heroes worthy of compensation.

Slavery produced visually striking forms of discipline – ones that reflected how slaveowners used disabling conditions in an attempt to prevent the enslaved from moving freely. In Barbados, apprehended fugitives were imprisoned in the ‘cage’ at the center of Bridgetown until slaveowners claimed them.³⁰ A runaway advertisement in 1783 described ‘a dark complexioned Indian fellow, nam’d James, about five feet six inches high, with a defect in one of his insteps.’ James’ owner, Samuel Mapp, offered a reward of 10 shillings to whoever apprehended him and ‘lodge[d] the said fellow in the cage in Bridgetown.’³¹ Advertisements that mentioned the cage were commonplace in Barbados newspapers well into the nineteenth century. An advertisement in 1815 opened with the following announcement: ‘Fifty shillings reward will be given for apprehending and lodging in the Cage, a yellow-skin man by the name Quashey, formerly the property of Elizabeth Clement, deceased.’³² The cage reinforced and perpetuated a cycle of broken and disabled enslaved bodies by limiting the individual’s movement and publicly displaying their immobility but it was by no means the only method of doing so.

In Barbados, the 1708 slave laws prohibited the removal of collars and manacles from enslaved people’s bodies with a penalty of £10. Lawmakers acknowledged that ‘the inhabitants in this Island do often put Hooks and Rings, or Collars round their Negroes Necks and Legs that absent themselves and run away from their Master or Mistress’s service, the better to distinguish them, so

that hereby they may be apprehended and brought home.’ They continued by claiming that as of late, such collars had been removed ‘by which means they [the enslaved] are not known, and thereby keep out much longer from their Master’s and Mistress’s service, to their great detriment and damage.’³³ These iron collars often included projecting spikes to prevent the individual from moving into areas with trees or bushes. Fugitives were also made to wear iron shackles with projecting spikes around their ankles, which lacerated the skin of the opposing ankle if the individual ran. During his trip to Jamaica (1687–89), Hans Sloane explained that ‘for Running away ... [masters] put Iron Rings of great weight on their [slaves’] ankles, or Pottocks about their necks, which are Iron Rings with two long Necks rivetted to them, or a spur in the mouth.’³⁴ The spur, or ‘mask,’ was often used for insolence, a charge made by plantation authorities usually against bondswomen for language ‘crimes’, which included uttering insulting or threatening songs and speaking patois or creole, which slave-owners struggled to understand.³⁵ The use of a spur or other manacle caused severe pain and prevented the sufferer from speaking, eating, and even swallowing.³⁶ Such measures made mutes of bondpeople but also caused physical trauma on the mouth.³⁷ Mentions of iron restraints were not uncommon in runaway advertisements. For instance, when Nancy ran away from her owner, Thomas Hobson, in 1781 she had on ‘an iron collar.’³⁸ In 1760, an enslaved carpenter named Kent, ran away with several brand marks on his chest and shoulders and ‘a collar about his Neck.’³⁹ In 1797, Hamilton fled with ‘a chain and collar round his Neck’ and was expected to be harbored in Kingston.⁴⁰ Chains were obviously material restraints that augmented chattel status and disabled the enslaved by limiting the body’s potential for movement. Both collars and chains abraded the skin and caused open sores and infections, which could limit the body’s ability to move freely long after the shackles were removed. The physical impact of wearing a collar every day would have been undoubtedly debilitating. Collars and chains also caused scars, which disfigured the skin and left a permanent reminder of enslavement.

Limiting bondpeople’s freedom of movement went beyond enforced forms of physically damaging brutalization. Lawmakers imposed metaphoric disabilities as well. Before runaway advertisements were popularized, the necessity of surveillance was widely appreciated by the white residents of the British Caribbean. The first comprehensive Barbadian and Jamaican slave codes required that captives carry a ‘ticket,’ a written document that was authorized by the subject’s owner or overseer, permitting the bondsperson to be temporarily absent from the plantation on ‘necessary business.’⁴¹ As Jenifer Barclay argues, the use of such tickets, or ‘authorization papers’ as they were sometimes called, ‘reflected slaveholders’ desire to imagine and construct enslaved blacks as wholly dependent and limited cripples.’⁴² Outside of the law, the enslaved were under constant surveillance – or at least the threat of surveillance – from drivers, watchmen, and slavecatchers, and they were forced to endure a culture of

fear, the message of which was entirely transparent: all of white society was constantly on guard, watching and monitoring the island.

At most authorization papers offered white residents the opportunity to indulge in a fiction of control and authenticity. The extent to which tickets were successful in preventing the enslaved from unauthorized absences is difficult to gage; however, runaway advertisements give us some indication.⁴³ For instance, in 1781 Jacob Hill placed an advertisement in *The Royal Gazette* for three runaways. According to Hill, Preston had escaped four weeks ago. He was 'of a yellow complexion; his breast very remarkable, appearing full, like that of a young girl; stout made; has very crooked legs, with a sore on one ... is marked on both shoulders IH, diamond on top.' The second runaway was named Sam, who a few days prior 'went in search of Preston with a ticket, but through a mistake did not mention when he was to return.'⁴⁴ Sam took advantage of the ticket system to forge his own freedom and undermine the institution of slavery's attempts to limit bondspeople's movement. The promise of controlled mobility and identification also led to tickets being used as a means of undermining surveillance, through the increase of forgery. The increase in literacy among the enslaved in the early nineteenth century made forgery of written authorization more common; it was likely that this influenced the Barbadian Assembly's exclusion of tickets from the 1826 slave code, and its decision to make forgery a capital offence punishable by death.⁴⁵ Bondspeople's consistent pursuit of freedom speaks to the ways in which limit, and by extension disability, were regarded as meaningful forms of resistance to Atlantic slavery.

Violence and the impoverished world of slavery

Runaway ads demonstrate that punishments that disfigured and impaired the enslaved were not just legal threats. As the visual evidence of punishments meted out on plantations, the marks of violence shown in runaway advertisements activate one's imagination for the simple reason that they suggest that which is absent – the act of violence itself.⁴⁶ Some advertisements specified that these identifying marks were the result of punishment, whereas others merely implied that violence had taken place. The clearest and most frequently employed indication of violence was mention of the whip. While flogging constituted a common punishment for both free and unfree laborers in the Caribbean as well as in the metropole, marks from the whip were specifically associated with blackness and the captive population of the British Caribbean.⁴⁷ The *Barbados Gazette and General Intelligencer* ran an advertisement in October 1787 that described a fugitive named Mary as having marks of the whip on her cheek.⁴⁸ Another, published in the *Supplement to the Royal Gazette* in 1795, wrote of a man named Ned who had a small scar on his cheek 'by accident of a whip lash.'⁴⁹ Several years later in the *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown*

Gazette, George was said to have ‘very large scars on his shoulders, from some former severe whipping.’⁵⁰ It is worth noting that, writing in 1795 at the height of the abolitionist movement, Ned’s subscriber claimed that his scar was ‘by accident,’ and George’s subscriber writing in 1808, one year after the abolition of the slave trade, claimed that the marks of punishment inflicted onto George were ‘from some *former* whipping.’ This language suggests that slaveowners were aware of attitudinal changes toward slavery sweeping the Atlantic World and changed the language of runaway advertisements to avoid culpability. Others were simply said to have had ‘marks of punishment’ on their bodies.⁵¹

Flogging not only disfigured enslaved people’s bodies but could lead to physical impairment. Writing in the late eighteenth century, slaveowner Joshua Steele explained that the usual order of 39 lashes was ‘more than sufficient, in many constitutions, to send [the enslaved] out of the world with a *locked jaw*, a convulsion commonly excited by great pain, in this climate.’⁵² Severe flogging could and did result in the death of bondspeople. Based on this knowledge, we can presume that for those who survived, their bodies’ ability to move and function in daily tasks would have been permanently compromised.

Disability presents itself ‘through two main modalities – function and appearance.’⁵³ Marks of punishment, then, including brands and marks of the whip, had the potential to disable not necessarily through function but through appearance by making the so-called disobedience of the enslaved salient in slave society. Permanent disfigurement of the flesh created a visual indication of one’s enslaved status and the body’s relationship to the owner. When used as identifying marks in runaway advertisements, such marks functioned as a kind of powerful surveillance that ultimately limited how and where individuals moved. Like disability, disfigurement carried stigma. Marks of punishment, such as the whip, inscribed individuals with so-called rebelliousness and, in doing so, decreased one’s worth on the open market. In devaluing one’s commodified worth, such disfigurements had the potential to prohibit an enslaved person from escaping a particularly tyrannical owner or overseer through sale. By disfiguring the flesh of bondspeople, lawmakers and planters attempted to make black skin a living reflection of imperial and slaveholding power. There was also a normative or prescriptive element to this as well: the scarred body permanently memorialized individuals’ experiences in slavery.

Thomas Thistlewood’s diary provides a vivid demonstration of the various ways enslaved bodies, and in particular those of ‘incorrigible’ runaways, were marked with the signs of servitude and dispossession. Coobah, an enslaved woman who first ran away from Thistlewood’s plantation in 1765 and then repeatedly starting again in 1769, was flogged, put in chains and collar restraints, and kept in the stock at night numerous times throughout her 13 years on Thistlewood’s plantation. She also suffered from smallpox and several bouts of venereal disease. In July 1770, Thistlewood ‘flogged her well and brand marked her in the forehead.’⁵⁴ Her brand served as a means to render her body legible, and to

fix her identity as criminal.⁵⁵ Coobah had become a liability to Thistlewood, and her absence deprived him of more than just one enslaved laborer when he was forced to order some of his other captives to search for her. In May 1774 Thistlewood sold Coobah to a planter in Georgia. Though this was in no way an escape from slavery, her constant acts of running away took her away from sugar production to what may have been a less hostile labor environment in Georgia.⁵⁶ Coobah entered this new place bearing marks of her servitude on her body, marks that displayed a fragmented personal history of her experiences in enslavement and attempts to self-emancipate. While Coobah's slavery-induced marks did not necessarily impair her, they provided a narrative of rebelliousness that could have caused her social stigma in her new environment and made her more prone to the violence that is often associated with disability. Conversely, these same marks could have garnered her respect among the enslaved for her refusal to accept the terms of her enslavement.

Dismembered limbs and extremities were frequently mentioned in runaway advertisements and although toes, feet, legs, hands, and arms were sometimes amputated or cut off because of sores, such amputations could also be evidence of punishments, particularly for runaways.⁵⁷ In 1717 the Jamaica Assembly made it illegal for masters to dismember captives on their own property, with the exception of runaways who were 'to be punished, by cutting off one of the Feet of such Slave, or inflicting such other corporal Punishment as they [Justices of the Peace and Freeholders] shall think fit.'⁵⁸ This law was in effect until the amelioration act of 1788. In 1783 a Jamaica planter described his runaway captive, Dan, as having 'a wooden leg' because 'he had his leg cut off for robbing the late Mr. John McDonald, then overseer of Drax Hall.'⁵⁹ John Tharp, another Jamaica planter, described his runaway Cuffee as 'a desperate villain ... [who] had his nose cropt for being formerly runaway.'⁶⁰ A Mr. Drummon told Olaudah Equiano that he cut off a bondsperson's leg for running away, which he said served its purpose since 'it cured that man and some others of running away.'⁶¹

Runaway advertisements reflected this violence. To deter running away, owners sadistically punished the enslaved and meted out 'all kinds of abominations. ...such as deliberately crippling them and even sawing off their offending legs.'⁶² An advertisement published in the *Barbados Gazette and General Intelligencer* in 1788 read:

Absented from the subscriber, a negro man named Joe, formerly the property of Thomas Burton, Esq. deceased. He is about six feet high, one of his legs has been taken off above the knee, and he speaks very good English.⁶³

In July 1789 a notice published in Jamaica described a female fugitive, Liddy, who had 'lost her right hand above the wrist, and had an iron collar round her neck.'⁶⁴ The iron collar on Liddy suggests that she had previously run

away from her owner; her amputated right hand may be indicative of a punishment for a criminal offence or of a labor accident.

Sugar production was an incredibly disabling enterprise. Enslaved laborers were regularly dismembered, burned, and maimed in sugar production. For the previously mentioned Joe, having one leg 'taken off above the knee' could have been punishment for a prior escape; it could also have been a forced amputation after an injury sustained working in the cane field. The boiling house – the architectural feature and work environment of the plantation that most resembled the factory – required the technical mastery of sugar boilers, who worked in extremely hot, loud, and dangerous conditions. Boilers were also susceptible to dismemberment from having their hands and arms caught in the mill as well as from burns, which sometimes caused death.

Others were described as missing ears, toes, fingers, and teeth. For instance, on 10 February 1780, Dorothy Peake advertised for several runaways, including Kent, 'a cooper by trade ... [with] a piece taken off one of his ears, of middle age, is a well set fellow, rather bow-legged, and about 5 feet 7 inches.'⁶⁵ Kent's amputated ear was a common punishment in Caribbean slave societies although it was not specified in the laws of either Barbados or Jamaica. Missing toes were also common in runaway advertisements and could be an indication of punishment, disease, or labor accidents. A man named James was described as having 'both his great toes cut off.'⁶⁶ Missing teeth were frequently mentioned in runaway advertisements. For instance, Sarah Gittens described Betty as 'very bandy, has lost most of her teeth, one of the joints of the middle toe of her right foot, and has a scar on the inside of her left leg.'⁶⁷ Another advertisement referred to bondsman Billy Harwood as having 'a black mark under his left eye from being blown by gunpowder, a scar upon his upper lip, two of his fore teeth out, and a scar on the throat.'⁶⁸

Like amputated toes, missing teeth could be caused by a variety of different circumstances – violence, labor accident, or malnutrition – however, slave narratives demonstrate that knocking one's teeth out was a common punishment inflicted onto enslaved people for eating sugarcane. For instance, Ottobah Cugoano explained that 'for eating a piece of sugarcane, some were cruelly lashed, or struck over the face to knock their teeth out.' Some enslaved people, he wrote, 'had their teeth pulled out to deter others, and to prevent them from eating any cane in the future.'⁶⁹ Such violence would have caused immediate pain as well as long-term effects for enslaved individuals. For instance, loss of teeth would have significantly altered one's physical appearance as well as their daily lives, resulting in impaired chewing ability and therefore quantity of food intake as well as speech difficulties.

The materially impoverished worlds in which the enslaved lived – lacking adequate food, clothing, and housing, and forced to work in unsanitary conditions – produced disabling illnesses. Runaway advertisements record several individuals described as being 'defective in walking,' 'crippled,' 'crooked,'

‘walk[ing] a little lame from a hurt on one of his legs,’ and ‘in a debilitated state.’ A ‘mulatto’ man, Samuel Millar, was described as ‘afflicted to have the rheumatism in his arm.’⁷⁰ In 1806, an enslaved girl named Clarissa was described as having ‘the third finger on her right hand crippled, a mark under her right eye, and has also the marks of punishment.’⁷¹ ‘Lameness,’ ‘crippled’ limbs, and ‘abnormal’ gaits were some of the most common forms of physical impairment displayed and described in Barbadian and Jamaican runaway notices but they were produced through a variety of circumstances.

Blindness also made regular appearances in runaway advertisements, though the condition did not necessarily impair one’s ability to be productive on the plantation, where it was more common for bondspeople to experience a loss of vision due to environmental conditions. Blindness, missing eyes, or ‘sore eyes’ could be caused by a vitamin A deficiency, infection, allergies, accident, or punishment.⁷² In 1795, a slaveowner advertised for his missing bondswoman named Stella who was ‘generally known for having only one eye and a small leg.’⁷³ Enslaved individuals who became blind had to learn how to navigate their new reality and keep up with the demands of plantation labor. For instance, a 1791 runaway advertisement from Jamaica described Bob as a ‘stout able negro man ... of the Congo country’ who was ‘marked on one shoulder G.G.’ Bob was ‘blind of the left eye [and] has a large scar across his left cheek, which he got about sixteen years ago by the kick of a Mule, by which accident he came to lose his eye.’ According to the subscriber of the advertisement, Bob was a ‘most excellent swimmer and diver [and] has been occasionally employed as a fisherman and sailor negro.’⁷⁴ Despite his disability, Bob clearly remained a productive laborer, one who was valued by his owner for his skills. The commonplace nature of these disabilities produced a naturalizing effect that blacks were inherently disabled and therefore suited for slavery.

In a social order predicated on black enslavement and white freedom, not all disabilities were created equal. Some impairments common among the enslaved did not constitute disabilities because planters found new ways to repurpose bodies that in other historical contexts, industrial Europe, for instance, would have been disposed of because of their impairments. In some cases, disability made enslaved individuals more valuable without producing contradictions or fear of wasting a capable worker. Impaired sight, for instance, was common among watchmen, who were often recruited from old and infirm bondsmen whose disabilities made them unfit for field labor. Watchmen monitored the plantation grounds in search of runaways and other ‘criminal’ behavior. In the night, explained one plantation management guide, ‘runaway negroes. ...are subject and too prone to rob and plunder the grounds of your negroes. Let therefore proper watch houses be built at due distances around the same, and the watch be prepared with a gun and watch dogs to give notice if any approach to commit their ... robberys.’⁷⁵ In 1776, all three watchmen on the Newton plantation, at Christ Church, Barbados, were defined as ‘old,’ while

on the Seawell plantation the head boiler and watchman, Obo, was described as ‘very old and weak with one eye.’⁷⁶ A notice for a female runaway, Sarah, mentioned that she had been ‘employed as a watch,’ and described her as ‘dim-sighted.’⁷⁷ As the plantation management guide put it, ‘old negroes that are past labor are fittest for such watchers, as they are not so subject to sleep as young and laboring negroes.’⁷⁸ Slavery produced overlapping and multifaceted forms of black disability.

Conclusion

As we have seen, disease, deformity, disfigurement, and impairment – in a word, disability – were widely displayed in newspapers across Barbados and Jamaica during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The identifying marks described in runaway advertisements changed over time, specifically with the amelioration period. Mentions of branding declined significantly in the last decade of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries, whereas other forms of disfigurements, deformities, and disabilities increased. While branding in runaway advertisements waned in response to abolitionists’ critique of branding as reflective of slavery’s terror, in place of branding were a host of other disfiguring and disabling marks used in the identification and apprehension of fugitive bondspeople. Runaway advertisements further indicate that plantation authorities were aware of the antislavery discourse and responded to abolitionist attacks by using language of ‘former’ whippings in order to evade responsibility for such violence. This change over time suggests that slaveowners altered the language used in runaway advertisements to avoid abolitionist critiques but continued to uphold a culture of unchecked violence against the enslaved.

The display of wounds in Caribbean fugitive notices was part of the long and overlapping history of the staging of race and disability for visual consumption. But what distinguishes these advertisements from other forms of display, such as freak shows and curiosity cabinets, is the terror that they engendered. Runaway advertisements did not spark wonder like depictions of black bodies in earlier travelogues. Rather, fugitive notices reflected the fear with which white society associated the supposedly dangerous and disorderly enslaved population. These advertisements were above all a reflection of the plantocracy’s anxiety over the need to sustain the institution of slavery. This fear expressed itself in the kinds of violence slaveowners imparted on the enslaved and their use of runaway advertisements to exert control over the enslaved through disabling terror. Runaway advertisements were themselves disabling in that they acted as a form of widespread surveillance and policing measure that attempted to limit bondspeople’s freedom of movement.

The violently marked fugitives whose experiences were recorded in runaway advertisements reveal dramatic personal stories of freedom and enslavement.

The pervasiveness of impairment described in runaway advertisements illustrates the degree to which impairment and disability affected bondspeople, shaping their experiences of enslavement. Some measure of the brutality of these experiences is provided by the fact that individuals dared to run away despite their physical limitations, which in many cases significantly limited their physical mobility in the often inhospitable Barbadian and Jamaican hinterlands. In the context of slavery, the image of the black body was never just individual – it was, rather, emblematic of a collective body. But the marks recorded in runaway notices held different meanings for different readers.⁷⁹ For the slaveholding reading public, marks of punishment may have signaled, not cruel violence meted out to defenseless bodies, but rather the triumph of judicial order over violence and chaos.⁸⁰ For others, uncomfortable with this simplistic narrative of slavery, such marks signaled a multi-layered story of an individual's endurance of slavery and struggle for autonomy and self-emancipation.

Notes

1. 'An Act for the Governing of Negroes', (1692) in Richard Hall, *Acts Passed in the Island of Barbados From 1643–1762, Inclusive ...* (London, 1764), 130.
2. Jerome S. Handler, 'Escaping Slavery in a Caribbean Plantation Society: Marronage in Barbados, 1650s–1830s', *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids-New West Indian Guide* 71, no. 3/4 (1997): 184.
3. Gad Heuman, 'Runaway Slaves in Nineteenth-Century Barbados', *Slavery & Abolition* Special Issue: Out of the House of Bondage 6, no. 3 (1985): 95; Jerome Handler, 'Diseases and Medical Disabilities of Enslaved Barbadians, From the Seventeenth Century to around 1838: Part 2', *The Journal of Caribbean History* 40, no. 1 (2006): 183–84.
4. An Act for the better ordering and governing of Negroes (Barbados, 1661), on microfilm at the Faculty of Law Library at the University of West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados (henceforth called the 1661 Barbados Slave Code); Act for the better ordering and governing of Negro Slaves (Jamaica, 1664), on microfilm at the Faculty of Law Library at the University of West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados (henceforth called the 1664 Jamaica Slave Code). By 1688 Barbados law had changed from 'keeper of the prison' to 'the Keeper of the Cage,' which reflected the island's use of the Cage as a form of imprisonment for fugitives until owners laid claim to them.
5. The 1661 Barbados Slave Law, Clauses 1, 4–21 (excepting clause 17). Similar wording can be found in the 1664 Jamaica Slave Code, Clauses 4–12, 17–19.
6. An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes in Laws and Acts by Sr. Thomas Lynch at Jamaica in February 1673 (KJ715 2000, UWI Cave Hill Law Library).
7. An Act for Governing Slaves in Laws Transmitted to Jamaica in 1678 Jamaica on microfilm at the Faculty of Law Library at the University of West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados.
8. *The Act of Assembly of the Island of Jamaica, to Repeal Several Acts, and Clauses of Acts, Respecting Slaves, and for the Better Order and Government of Slaves, and for other Purposes; Commonly Called the Consolidated Act* (London, M.DCC.LXXXVIII. [1788]), 17 (henceforth referred to as *The act of assembly of the island of Jamaica ... The Consolidated Act*).

9. British colonial newspapers were part of a transatlantic ‘news revolution,’ such that by the mid-eighteenth century, newspapers had become a central feature of everyday life, not just in European cities but in colonial ones as well. To these were added advertisements seeking criminals, fugitives, and missing persons through the dissemination of detailed physical descriptions. Mark S. Dawson, ‘First Impressions: Newspaper Advertisements and Early Modern English Body Imaging, 1651–1750’, *Journal of British Studies* 50, no. 2 (April 2011): 278.
10. For a discussion of the power of the everyday in race-making see, Thomas C. Holt, ‘Marking: Race, Race-Making, and the Writing of History’, *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 1 (Feb., 1995): 1–20.
11. There is a vast literature on making race in the Atlantic. See for instance, Rana A. Hogarth, *Medicalizing Blackness: Making Racial Difference in the Atlantic World, 1780–1840* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Jenny Shaw, *Everyday Life in the Early English Caribbean: Irish, Africans, and the Construction of Difference* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2013); Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Joyce E. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500–1676* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Andrew S. Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science & Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2011); Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600–2000* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996).
12. For examples of studies on runaway advertisements in the Atlantic World see Gad Heuman, ed., *Out of the House of Bondage: Runaways, Resistance and Marronage in Africa and the New World* (London: Frank Cass, 1986); Jonathan Prude, ‘To Look Upon the “Lower Sort”: Runaway Ads and the Appearance of Unfree Laborers in America, 1750–1800’, *Journal of American History* 78 (June 1991): 124–59; David Waldstreicher, ‘Reading the Runaways: Self-Fashioning, Print Culture, and Confidence in Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic’, *The William and Mary Quarterly Special Issue: African and American Atlantic Worlds*, Third Series 56, no. 2, (April 1999): 243–72; John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Marisa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*, esp. chapter 1 ‘Jane: Fugitivity, Space, and Structures of Control in Bridgetown’, 13–45 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Charmaine A. Nelson, ‘“Ran away from her Master ... a Negro Girl Named Thursday”: Examining Evidence of Punishment, Isolation, and Trauma in Nova Scotia and Quebec Fugitive Slave Advertisements’, in *Legal Violence and the Limits of the Law*, eds. Amy Swiffen and Joshua Nichols (London: Routledge, 2017), 68–91. Recently, a number of scholars and institutions have produced online databases of runaway advertisements, including but not limited to: the Documenting Runaway Slaves Project (runawaysslaves.usm.edu), which includes seven collections (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Jamaica, Bahamas, British Guiana/Suriname), Freedom on the Move (freedomonthemove.org), Saint Domingue (marronage.info), Canada (<https://earlycanadianhistory.ca/2016/02/29/canadian-fugitive-slave-adver...>), Connecticut (<http://runawayct.org/about>), Maryland (<http://www.afrigenaes>).

[com/library/runaway_ads/balt-intro.html](https://twitter.com/library/runaway_ads/balt-intro.html)), and Slavery Adverts 250 (<https://twitter.com/SlaveAdverts250>).

13. The majority of newspapers that have survived are from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. I have included only paid advertisements, submitted to the newspapers by plantations owners or overseers and not those submitted by gaolers and workhouse administrators. All of the runaway advertisements are original; I have not counted repeat notices as part of this collection. *Barbados Mercury* 1770 September 22; 1770 October 6; 1770 October 13; 1783 April 19; 1783 May 17; 1783 May 24; 1783 July 19; 1783 August 2; 1783 September 13; 1783 September 20; 1783 October 4; 1783 October 11; 1783 October 25; 1783 November 15; 1783 November 22; 1783 November 29; 1784 May 29; 1784 August 28; 1784 October 19; 1787 August 18; 1787 September 15; 1787 December 15; 1787 December 21; 1788 January 5; 1788 February 2; 1788 February 26; 1788 March 1; 1788 March 8; 1788 March 15; 1788 April 1; 1788 April 12; 1788 May 6; 1788 June 14; 1788 June 17; 1788 August 23; 1788 August 30; 1788 September 20; 1788 October 28; 1788 November 15; 1788 December 20; 1788 December 30; 1789 January 13. *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette*, 1805 January–December 1815. *Barbados Gazette and General Intelligencer*, 1787 September–1789 February. *Royal Gazette*, 1780 April–1781 December; 1790 April 27; 1790 June 1; 1790 October 1; 1790 October 4; 1790 November 3; 1790 December 12; 1790 December 20; 1791 January–December; 1792 January 9; 1792 March 10; 1792 May 9; 1792 May 12; 1795 January–December. *Jamaica Mercury*, 1779 June–March 1780. *Cornwall Chronicle*, 1775 July 2; 1776 May 26; 1776 May 30; 1776 June 20; 1776 June 28; 1776 September 10; 1776 September 26; 1776 November 1; 1776 November–1777 May; 1781 March 2; 1781 March 8; 1781 July 6; 1781 July 7; 1781 July 27; 1781 August 20–December 21; 1782 January 11; 1782 February 1; 1782 February 14; 1782 March 16; 1782 April 24; 1782 May 13; 1782 May 20; 1782 May 24; 1782 July 3; 1782 July 5; 1782 July 22; 1782 July 26; 1782 August–December; 1783 January–December 1786; 1792 June–November; 1793 February–December; 1794 March–June 1795. *Jamaica Mercury and Kingston Weekly Advertiser*, 1779 April–June; 1779 November 27; 1779 July 28; 1779 August 6; 1779 December 2. *Supplement to the Jamaica Mercury*, 1779 May; 1778 April 7, 14; 1779 June–July. *Royal Gazette*, 1787 May 26; 1787 August 25 postscript; 1787 September 8 supplement. *Cornwall Chronicle*, and *Jamaica General Advertiser* 1781 June 9; 1789 November 7; 1791 July 2, suppl.; 1791 July 2, post.; 1791 July 9; 1791 July 9, suppl.; 1791 July 16; 1791 July 16, suppl.; 1791 July 23; 1791 July 23, suppl.; 1791 July 23 post.; 1791 July 30; 1791 July 30, suppl.; 1791 August 6; 1791 August 6 suppl.; 1791 August 13; 1791 August 13, suppl.; 1791 August 109, extraordinary; 1791 August 20; 1791 August 20, suppl.; 1797 December 2. *Barbados Mercury*, 1766 February 1; 1770 September 22; 1770 October 6; 1770 October 13; 1775 September 2; 1783–1784; 1805–1806. *Daily Advertiser*, 1791 January 1–31; 1791 February 1–28, with the exception of 27; 1791 March 1–31; 1791 April 1–30, with the exception of 10 and 17; 1791 May 2–31, with the exception of 8, 17, and 24; 1791 June 1–30, with the exception of 12, 19, and 26; 1791 July 1–30, with the exception of 3, 10, and 24; 1791 August 1–31, with the exception of 7, 14, 21, 28; 1791 September 1–30, with the exception of 4, 11, and 18; 1791 October 1–31, with the exception of 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30; 1791 November 1–30, with the exception of 6, 13, 20, and 27; 1791 December 1–31, with the exception of 4, 11, 18, and 25. *Weekly Jamaica Courant*, 1718 July 30; 1718 August 5; 1719 February 10; 1721 June 28; 1721 June 28; 1726 March 22; 1726 October 26; 1726 November 2; 1728 April 18; 1730 March 25; 1730 June 24; 1754 March 18; 1754 April 25; 1754 May 7; 1754 May 10; 1754 June 18; 1754 June 29; 1775 July 22. *Jamaica Gazette*, 1765 January 3. *Gazette*

- of *Saint Jago-de-la-Vega*, 1781 February–December. 1782 January–December, including: 1782 January 3 suppl.; 1782 January 10, suppl.; 1782 January 17, suppl.; 1782 January 24, suppl.; 1782 January 31, suppl.; October 17, suppl.; October 24, suppl.; October 31, suppl.; December 24, extraordinary; December 26, extraordinary; 1783 January–February. *Kingston Journal*, 1760 November 29; 1761 October 24. *Savanna-la-Mar Gazette*, 1788 July 15, 29, 29 suppl.; 1788 August 5, 12, 19, 26; 1788 September 2, 9, 23, 30, suppl. *Barbados Gazette*, 1753 May 30; 1755 August 2; November 1787 to February 1789; March 16, 1797. *Diary and Kingston Daily Advertiser*, 1796 December 29. *Saint Jago Intelligencer*, 1768 April 16. *Supplement to the Kingston Journal and Universal Museum*, 1776 October 26. *Jamaica Mercury*, 1798 January 17.
14. For a discussion of the psychological impact of slavery, specifically the Middle Passage, on bondpeople see Sowande' M. Muskateem, *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage*, esp. chapter 5 'Battered Bodies, Enfeebled Minds' (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 106–130.
 15. Paul Longmore and Lauri Umanski, eds., *The New Disability History: American Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); Herbert Muyinda, 'Negotiating Disability: Mobilization and Organization among Landmine Survivors in Late Twentieth-Century Northern Uganda', in *Disability Histories*, eds. Susan Burch and Michael Rembis (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 98–115.
 16. The yaws began with swelling of the skin, bone, and cartilage and could deform and disable the hands, feet, and legs of the individual sufferer. Jerome Handler, 'Diseases and Medical Disabilities of Enslaved Barbadians, From the Seventeenth Century to around 1838: Part 1', *The Journal of Caribbean History* 40, no. 1 (2006): 22.
 17. The information displayed in these pie charts is derived from my entire dataset of runaway advertisements from 1718 to 1815.
 18. Thomas Clarkson, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African, Translated from a Latin dissertation ...* (London, 1786), 145.
 19. Thomas Clarkson, *Negro Slavery: Argument that the Colonial Slaves are Better off than the British Peasantry/answered from the Royal Jamaica Gazette* (Birmingham, 1824), 95. Italics are original.
 20. Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America* (New York: Routledge Inc., 2000), 83.
 21. Prior to 1655, at least 11 Barbadian laws dealt with marronage, while 16 of the 23 clauses that comprised the island's 1661 slave code pertained to runaways. These laws limited bondpeople's freedom of movement by restricting where, when, and with whom the enslaved could move beyond the plantation grounds.
 22. 1661 Barbados Slave Code. Similar wording can be found in the 1664 Jamaica Slave Code.
 23. The 1661 Barbados Slave Code; the 1664 Jamaica Slave Code.
 24. An Additional Act to an Act, entitled 'An Act for the governing of Negroes' (1692) in *Acts Passed in the Island of Barbados From 1643–1762, Inclusive ...* Richard Hall (1764), p. 130–31
 25. 'An Act for the Further Encouragement of Parties, and More Speedy Reduction of Rebellious and Runaway Slaves' (1706–7), in *The Laws of Jamaica, Pass'd by the Governours, Council and Assembly in that Island, and Confirm'd by the Crown* (London: printed by W. Wilkins, at the Dolphin in Little-Britain, 1716), 378.
 26. 'An Act for the more effectual punishing of Crimes committed by Slaves' (1707) in *Acts of Assembly, passed in the island of Jamaica; from 1681, to 1737, inclusive* (London: 1743), 107–108.

27. 'An Act to Inflict Further and other Punishments on Runaway Slaves, and Such as Shall Entertain them' (1749) in *Acts of Assembly, passed in the island of Jamaica, from the year 1681 to the year 1769 inclusive. In two volumes*. Volume 2, Appendix: Laws Respecting Slaves (Kingston, Jamaica: 1787), 23. This specific act applied to enslaved individuals 18 years of age or older who had either been born in the island or resided there for three years or more.
28. *The Act of Assembly of the Island of Jamaica ... The Consolidated Act*, 24–25.
29. 'An Act for the More Effectual Raising Parties, to Pursue and Destroy Rebellious and Runaway Slaves' (1702), in *The Laws of Jamaica, Pass'd by the Governours, Council and Assembly in that Island, and Confirm'd by the Crown* (London, 1716), 440.
30. By the mid-eighteenth century, other towns in Barbados had cages, where fugitives were kept before their transfer to the main cage in Bridgetown. Handler, 'Escaping Slavery', 205.
31. *The Barbados Mercury*, 25 October 1783 (Barbados).
32. *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette*, 8 January 1805 (Barbados).
33. 'An Act to Prohibit the Inhabitants of this Island from Employing, their Negroes or other Slaves, in Selling or Bartering' (1708) in *Acts Passed in the Island of Barbados From 1643–1762, Inclusive ...* (London, 1764), 185.
34. Hans Sloane, *A Voyage to the Islands of Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers and Jamaica, with the Natural History of the Herbs and Trees, Four-Footed Beasts, Fishes, Birds, Insects, Reptiles, &c. of the Last of those Islands; To which is Prefix'd, An Introduction, wherein is an Account of the Inhabitants, Air, Waters, Diseases, Trade, &c. of that Place, with some Relations Concerning the Neighbouring Continent, and Islands of America. Illustrated with Figures of the Things Described, which have Not Been Hitherto Engraved. In Large Copper-Plates as Big as the Life* Vol. 1 of 2 (London, 1707–1725), vii.
35. This form of gendered torture derived from sixteenth-century English use of the scold's bridle, a torture device used against unruly or quarreling women to supposedly tame the tongue. See Lynda E. Boose, 'Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly Member', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (Summer, 1991): 179–213.
36. Thomas Branagan, *The Penitential Tyrant; or, Slave Trader Reformed* (2nd ed.) (New York, 1807), 271.
37. For a discussion of American slave law and metaphoric disabilities see Jenifer Barclay, "'The Greatest Degree of Perfection': Disability and the Construction of Race in American Slave Law', in *South Carolina Review Special Issue: Locating African American Literature*, eds. Rhonda Thomas and Angela Naimou 46, no. 2 (Spring 2014), 27–43.
38. *The Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega*, 15–22 November 1781 (Jamaica).
39. *The Kingston Journal*, 29 November 1760 (Jamaica).
40. *The Daily Advertiser*, 22 February 1797 (Jamaica).
41. The 1661 Barbados Slave Code.
42. Barclay, 'The Greatest Degree of Perfection', 36.
43. Handler, 'Escaping Slavery', 185.
44. *Supplement to the Royal Gazette*, 27 January to 2 February 1781 (Jamaica).
45. Handler, 'Escaping Slavery', 185.
46. Valentin Groebner, *Defaced: The Visual Culture of Violence in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 28.
47. More research is needed to determine a timeline of the shift from flogging as a punishment meted out to a variety of laborers, to the association of whip marks with black bodies. In the Caribbean, flogging was not solely reserved for the enslaved; it was used against free people of color until after emancipation. However, Diana Paton's

- study shows that by the late eighteenth century, the association between enslaved status and flogging was well entrenched in Jamaican society. See Diana Paton, 'Punishment, Crime, and the Bodies of Slaves in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica', *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 4 (2001): 938–939.
48. *Barbados Gazette and General Intelligencer*, 3–6 October 1787 (Barbados).
 49. *Supplement to the Royal Gazette*, 23–30 May 1795 (Jamaica).
 50. *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette*, 17 December 1808 (Barbados).
 51. *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette*, 3 June 1806 (Barbados).
 52. William Dickson, LL.D. *Mitigation of Slavery, In Two Parts. Part I: Letters and Papers of the Late Hon. Joshua Steele* (London: 1814), 147.
 53. Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London: Verso, 1995), 11.
 54. Thomas Thistlewood Papers. James Marshall and Marie Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. The use of branding on 'raced' bodies was not isolated to the colonial Caribbean. Across the British Empire, the branding of colonial subjects served as a form of punishment, deterrence, and as a means of registering an individual as a criminal. Clare Anderson's study of penal practices in British India, for example, shows that the *godna*, a type of brand or tattoo on the criminal's forehead that detailed its bearer's crimes, characteristics, and sentence, was administered by colonial authorities in the first half of the nineteenth century as a key part of state building. See Clare Anderson, *Legible Bodies: Race, Criminality and Colonialism in South Asia* (New York: Berg, 2004), 2.
 55. For a discussion of scars as markers of the commodification of the enslaved see Marisa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, 14–19.
 56. The labor and material conditions of enslavement in North America were generally less physically taxing than in the Caribbean, however, much of this depended on what kind of crop was grown. For instance, rice cultivation was as, if not more, physically destructive to enslaved bodies as sugar production. See Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern 1492–1800* (London: Verso, 1998), 459–483.
 57. Barry Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834* (University of the West Indies Press, 1995), 294.
 58. Elsa Goveia, *The West Indian Slave Laws of the 18th Century* (Caribbean Universities Press, 1970), 29.
 59. *Cornwall Chronicle* 12 July 1783 (Jamaica).
 60. *Cornwall Chronicle*, 26 March 1786 (Jamaica). In the laws of Jamaica, the cutting of the nose or nostrils was a punishment reserved for enslaved individuals who 'shall offer any violence to any Christian as by striking or the like'. See Barbados 1661, Jamaica 1664.
 61. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano Or, Gustavus Vassa, The African*, ed. Shelly Eversley ([1789] New York: Random House, 2004), 95.
 62. F.O Shyllon, *Black Slaves in Britain* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 12.
 63. *Barbados Gazette and General Intelligencer*, 2–5 July 1788 (Barbados).
 64. *The Royal Gazette*, 8 July 1789 (Jamaica).
 65. *Supplement to the Royal Gazette*, 1–8 April 1780 (Jamaica).
 66. *Supplement to the Royal Gazette*, 1–8 April 1780 (Jamaica).
 67. *Barbados Gazette and General Intelligencer*, 29 March–2 April 1788 (Barbados).
 68. *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette*, 16 January 1808 (Barbados).

69. Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Senitments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Humbly Submitted to the Inhabitants of Great-Britain*, by Ottobah Cugoano, *A Native of Africa* (London, 1787), 11.
70. Ibid.
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